

# Mary Beth Miller

Mary Beth Miller competed internationally for Canada and was extremely proud to do so. She had a passion for speed skating and cross-country skiing before getting hooked on biathlon at the age of 18. The sport, which combines shooting and cross country skiing requires both highly developed skills and cardiovascular stamina. She was a member of Biathlon Canada, the national biathlon association. She was a contender for Canada's Olympic Team and was training to reach that goal. As one of Canada's top female biathletes, she was accustomed to the grueling challenges of her high-performance sport.

She had been training with the Canadian Olympic Biathlon Team on the



Valcartier military base north of Quebec City when her dreams ended after a tragic encounter with a bear.

Mary Beth inspired youth in the Northwest Territories with her enthusiasm. Her mother, Mary Carol Miller said, "She was the most precious thing in our lives... She taught us all to live each day, each moment. She was full of vitality and there are athletes all over this country who have been encouraged by Mary Beth in their sport."

She held clinics for younger athletes on everything from motivation to dry land ski skating. When young biathletes from the NWT travelled to a national competition in Valcartier, she met them up at the airport and looked after them until their coach arrived.



She was a very determined young woman, really friendly and outgoing. The camaraderie of the sport was an attraction for her. Mary Beth was not a Northerner by birth, as she was born in Kitchener, Ontario, and moved to Yellowknife with her family when she was six years old, but she epitomized what it means to be a Northerner and a Northern Athlete.

She was a well-rounded athlete: a passionate participant in many sports including speed skating, cross-country skiing, hiking, mountain biking, canoeing, kayaking, bouldering, and biathlon. She was a very hardworking and driven athlete as evidenced by the grueling training she went through on a daily basis and her willingness to move



across the country to CFB Valcartier in Quebec for a summer of training with the Canadian Olympic Team.

Though competitive, she was also an incredibly kind and giving person. Whether it was offering encouragement to her fellow competitors or holding clinics for young athletes, Mary Beth was always willing to give back and help others. Put simply, she was an excellent role model for young athletes in the North and continues to be an inspiration to this day.

Following her graduation from Ecole Sir John Franklin High School in 1994, Mary Beth attended and graduated from Augustana University College in Camrose, AB, where she took part in the school's cross-country skiing and biathlon program.

In 1995, she was part of the NWT biathlon relay team that won a bronze medal at the Canada Winter Games. In 1997, she went on to represent Canada at the World Winter University Games in South Korea where she was the top Canadian biathlete.

In 1999, Mary Beth competed on the Alberta Cup Circuit and competed in the North American Cup in Salt Lake City, Utah. That same year, she won a bronze medal at the North American Biathlon Championships. Based on this success Mary Beth Miller was named the Northwest Territories Female Athlete of the Year for 1999.

**From Jack Rabbits to Dave Sutherland's High Performance Program, Mary Beth was well prepared by her NWT coaches for her future in biathlon.**